

#13
MOONSTONE™
\$3.50

THE PHANTOM™



Mike Bullock
Carlos Magno

THE PHANTOM

created by LEE FALK

"TIGER'S BLOOD"
PART TWO

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SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR PHANTOM CONSULTANT
ED RHOADES

MOONSTONE is...

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Nearly five centuries ago, during a daring raid at sea, pirates took the life of merchant ship captain Christopher Standish, ex-cabin boy of Christopher Columbus. In the heart of the pitched battle aboard the ship, Standish's son was knocked overboard to wash ashore on a remote beach where he was befriended by the legendary pygmy tribe, The Bandar. After stumbling upon the body of his father's killer, young Standish swore an oath on the murderer's skull to devote his life, and the lives of his sons, to the destruction of piracy, greed, cruelty, and injustice. Generation after generation, young Standish's blood line fought evil to their dying breath. To the outside world, there has been only one, seemingly immortal, who has worn the mask. As the legend grew, it transcended the life of any one man. And that legend became... **THE PHANTOM**

PRESENT TIME.

I HAVE
WAITED SO
VERY LONG
FOR THIS
DAY...

...EVER
SINCE YOU TOOK
MY MARIA FROM ME
I'VE HUNGERED
FOR MY
REVENGE.





FIVE YEARS AGO.



I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M GOING TO MARRY THE INTERNATIONAL KICK BOXING CHAMPION!

I'M SO PROUD OF YOU, MANUEL ORTEGA.



AND I AM SO PROUD TO BE MARRYING A POLITICAL ACTIVIST, MARIA. WITH YOU KEEPING THE POLITICIANS IN LINE, OUR LIVES WILL NEVER BE DULL, THAT'S FOR SURE.

HOW IS YOUR LATEST ASSIGNMENT COMING ALONG?



WHAT'S WRONG, MY LOVE?



ARTHUR, MY BOSS, HAS SHOWN ME HOW OUR LOCAL PUPPET GOVERNMENTS MISTREAT THEIR CITIZENS. THEY THINK THEY CAN TREAD ON THEM, WHILE THE LEADERS LIVE LIKE KINGS AND THE UNITED NATIONS DOES NOTHING.

CHILDREN STARVE, MOTHERS FIGHT DISEASE AND FATHERS ARE CONSCRIPTED TO FIGHT IN UNJUST WARS ALL SO THAT THESE EVIL MEN CAN REVEL IN THEIR DECADENCE.



LOOK! IT'S JUST AS I SAID!

ARTHUR TOLD ME THE
PHANTOM IS JUST A PAWN OF
BANGALLA'S **CORRUPT**
GOVERNMENT!

LOOK HOW HE **BEATS**
THESE POOR MEN INTO
SUBMISSION!

"LIBERTY"? CALL
ME CRAZY, BUT I
NEVER CONSIDERED
THE **DEATH** OF
INNOCENTS
LIBERATING.

YOU
CANNOT STOP
OUR **FIGHT**
FOR LIBERTY,
PURPLE
MAN!

YOU CAN NO
LONGER OPPRESS US,
INFIDEL! WE SHALL
WIPE YOUR **STAIN**
FROM THIS LAND!

NOW
DIE!

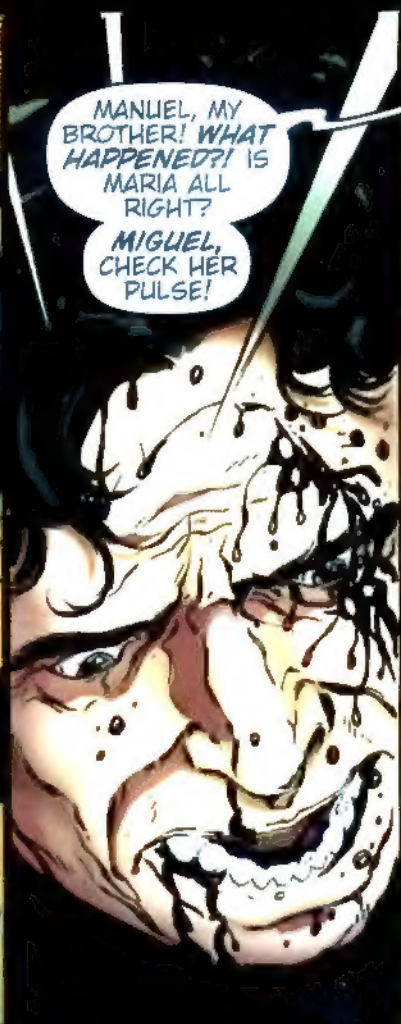




-COUGH-
MARIA...

IT LOOKS
LIKE YOUR
ARM MIGHT BE
BROKEN--WE'LL
HAVE TO GET YOU
SOME MEDICAL
ATTENTION.

BLESS YOU,
GHOST WHO
WALKS.



TWO DAYS AGO.

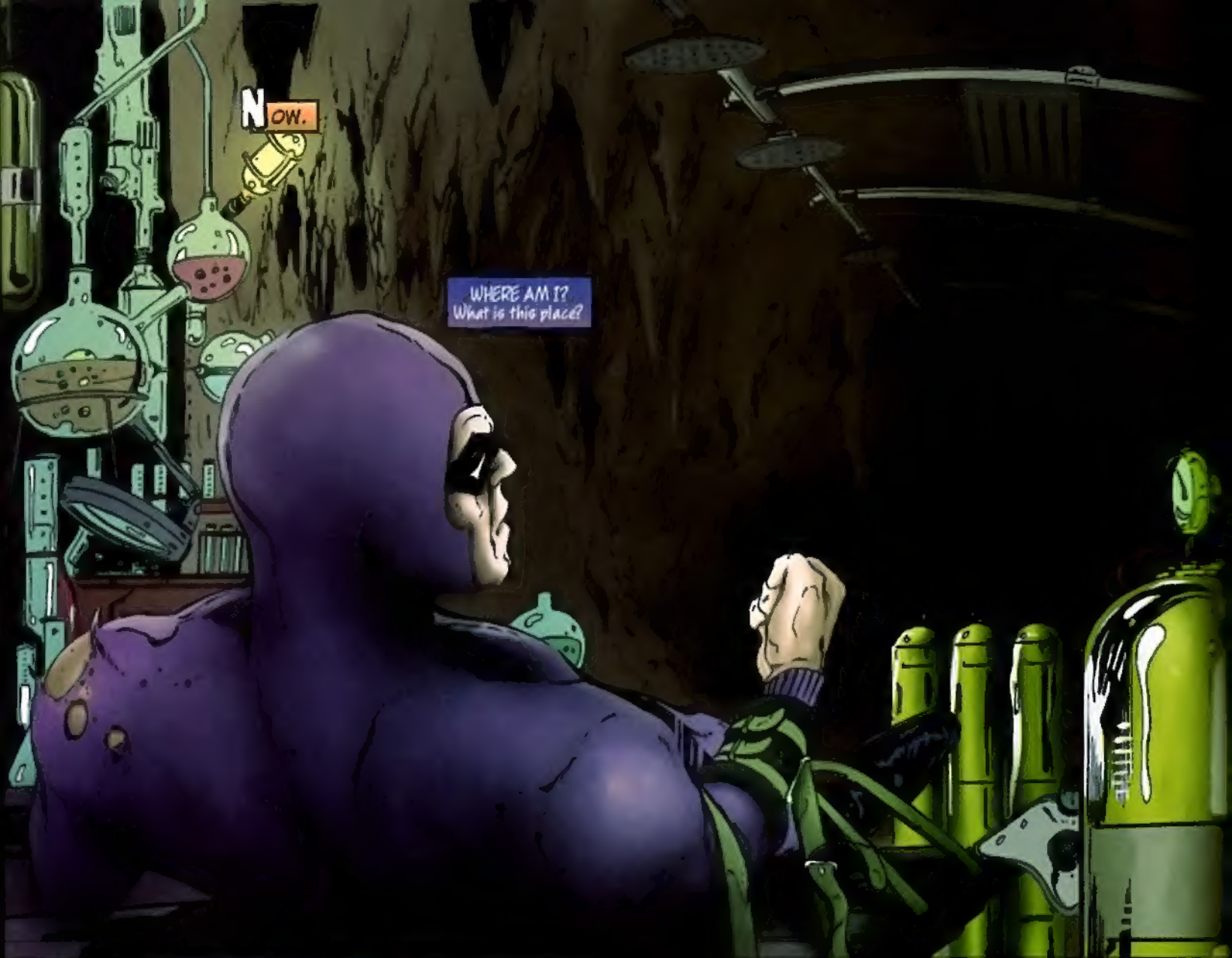
THE
JUNGLE. MY
HOME...
...TURNED
AGAINST
ME...

G-GURAN!

YOU HAVE
SHAMED YOUR
ANCESTORS, GHOST
WHO WALKS. YOU
HAVE **FAILED**
THEM.

THIS CAN'T BE
HAPPENING...





NOW.

WHERE AM I?
What is this place?



WE'RE GOING TO
NEED MORE TIGERS
SOON. HAS MR.
BLACKWOOD GOTTEN
MIGUEL AND CARLOS
OUT OF JAIL
YET?

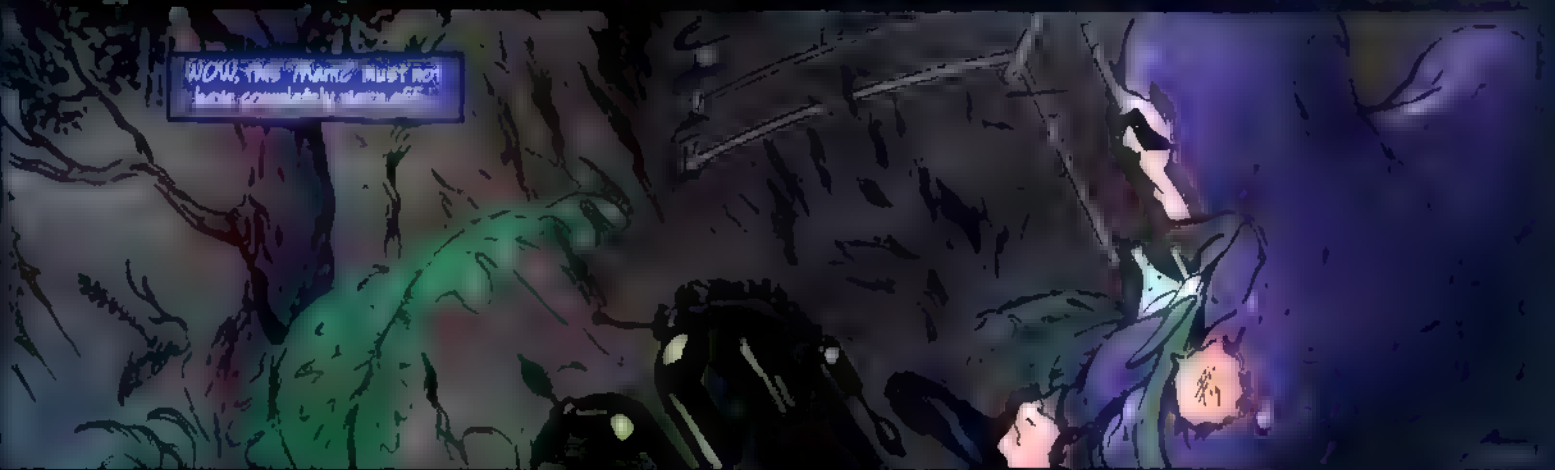
NOT YET, BUT DON'T WORRY.
MANUEL GAVE PHANTOM
ENOUGH MANIC TO **KNOCK
AN ELEPHANT OUT** FOR
A WEEK.

HE WON'T
BE COMING
AROUND FOR
AWHILE.



THAT'S THE
HIGHEST DOSE MANUEL'S
EVER GIVEN ANYONE.
THIS POOR BASTARD'S
BRAIN MUST BE
**SWIMMING IN NIGHT
TERRORS.**

HE'LL NEVER
RECOVER FROM
THE NIGHTMARE
HIS MIND IS
IMAGINING.



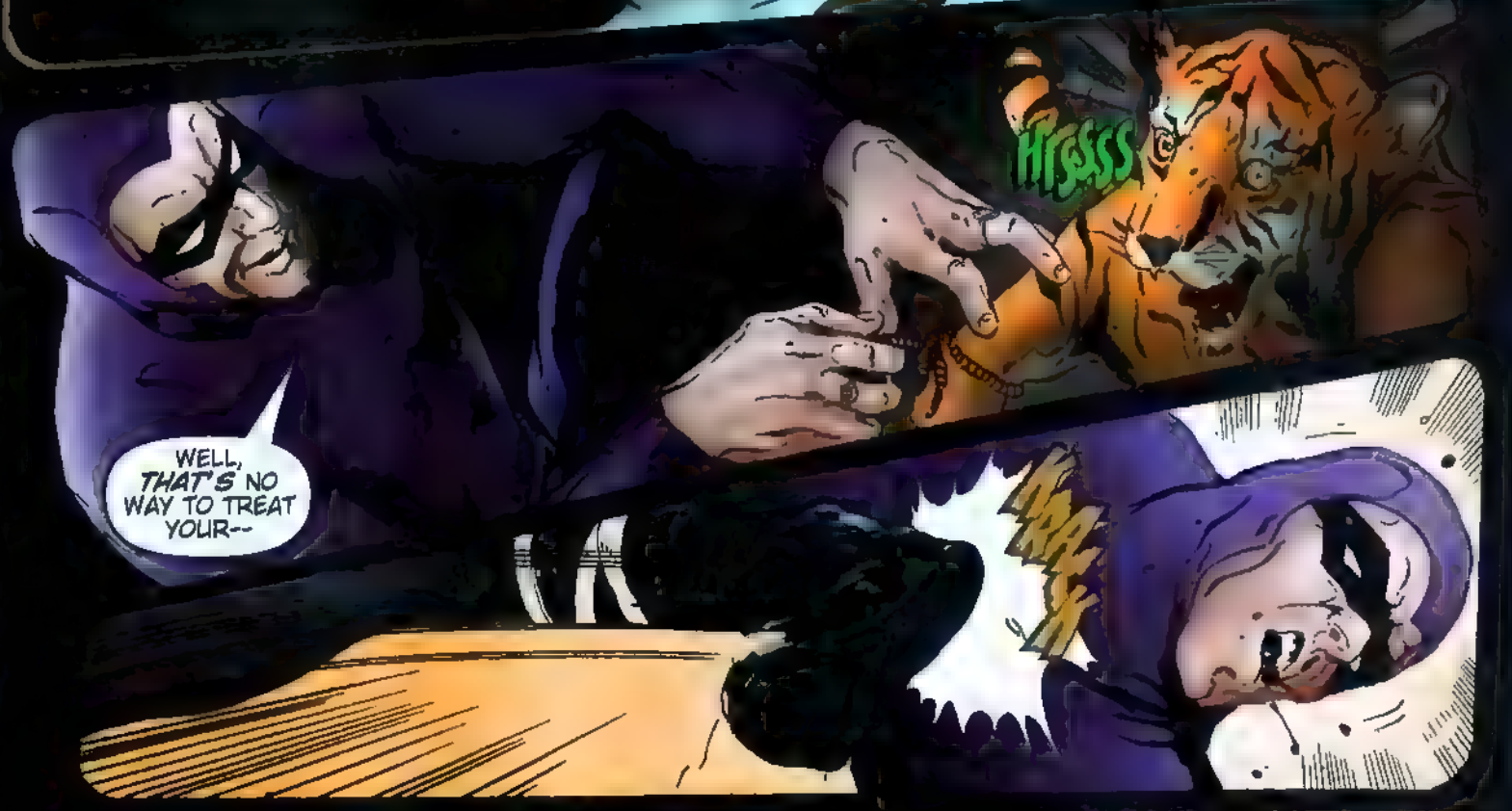
THREE DAYS
AGO.

OVER THERE,
HERO. THAT SOUNDS
LIKE ONE OF THE
ORPHANED TIGER CUBS.
THE CRY IS COMING
FROM THAT
CAVE.

MRRR-COWWWWW

MRRRRR

THIS MIGHT BE THE LAIR OF THOSE
TIGER POACHERS. I'D HEARD
SPECULATION THEY'VE SET UP A
BASE OF OPERATIONS IN ONE
OF THE CAVES.







ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE
NOT THINKING ABOUT
SOME *OTHER* GUY IN A
PURPLE SUIT?

JOKE ALL YOU WANT,
PHANTOM, BUT I SAW
YOU WITH MY OWN
EYES! DOING THEIR
BIDDING, LIKE THE
PAWN THAT
YOU ARE!



AND
NOW, YOU
SHALL FEEL
MY PAIN!

AAAHH--!

K-THWACK

THAT ISN'T
ORDINARY
DUST YOU'RE
BREATHING,
PHANTOM.



IT'S CALLED "MANIC"
AND I MADE IT JUST
FOR YOU...

OR DID YOU THINK
I'D JUST **STAND**
BY AND LET YOU
CONTINUE TO **RUIN**
MY LIFE?

THE DEATH OF MY
MARIA IS ON **YOUR**
HANDS, PHANTOM. HER
BLOOD STREAMS
THROUGH **YOUR**
FINGERS **EVERY DAY**
YOU WALK THIS
EARTH.

I THOUGHT YOU
MIGHT FIGURE IT
ALL OUT WHEN YOU
CAPTURED MY
BROTHERS, CARLOS
AND MIGUEL, WITH
THEIR IDIOT FRIEND
JAVIER.

BUT YOUR
ARROGANCE
BLINDED YOU
TO THE **BIG**
PICTURE.

WOMP

IT'S TOO
BAD, REALLY. I
THOUGHT YOU'D
BE **MUCH** MORE
CHALLENGING.

"GHOST
WHO WALKS"...
PFFFT!

NOW
YOU'LL BE
REMEMBERED
AS THE
"GHOST WHO
DIED!"



Now.

WE BETTER
HURRY UP--
MANUEL WILL
BE BACK
SOO--

URK!

THAT TAKES
CARE OF THE
CRONIES, NOW
WHERE'S
EL JEFE?

LOOKS
LIKE MR. WIZARD
HAS COME TO THE
JUNGLE. I WONDER
WHERE HE RAN
OFF TO...



MANUEL, I PRESUME?

THANKS FOR POPPING MY SHOULDER BACK IN PLACE. IT'LL MAKE IT MUCH EASIER TO BRING YOU DOWN.

I DOSED YOU WITH ENOUGH MANIC TO KEEP YOU ENTRENCHED IN YOUR NIGHTMARES FOR ANOTHER WEEK! IT'S AMAZING THAT YOU'VE OVERCOME THE DRUG SO QUICKLY.

MAYBE A VAPORIZED FORM WILL HAVE A STRONGER EFFECT ON YOU.

I GUESS YOU'RE GOING TO SLEEPY TOWN WITH ME?

OH NO, PHANTOM, I'VE METABOLIZED THE ANTIDOTE. THE ONLY NIGHTMARES WILL BE YOURS.



HERE'S A
LIFE LESSON
FOR YOU: IT'S
HARD TO SCARE
A MAN WHO HAS
NO FEAR.

AAAA-HAAAAA!



YOU'VE BEEN
SO EASY TO
MANIPULATE,
PHANTOM!

HOW
SO?



WE *KNEW*
YOU'D COME
LOOKING FOR
US ONCE MY
BROTHERS
STARTED
POACHING
THOSE
TIGERS.



BUT YOU
HAD NO IDEA WE
WERE USING THE
PHEROMONES FROM
THOSE ANIMALS TO
SYNTHESIZE YOUR
WORST
NIGHTMARE!



DID YOU
REALLY THINK
YOU COULD HIT
ANYTHING IN
YOUR CURRENT
STATE,
PHANTOM?



WHILE AT UNIVERSITY, ONE OF MY PROFESSORS THEORIZED THAT TIGERS AND OTHER LARGE CARNIVORES EXLUDED PHEROMONES TO **STRIKE FEAR** IN THEIR PREY.

LUCKY FOR YOU, I'VE MANAGED TO CREATE AN ARTIFICIAL STIMULANT THAT SEEMS TO BEAR THE SAME RESULTS.

THIS VERY PRODUCT IS WHAT'S TURNED YOU INTO A QUIVERING CHILD--

--GRIPPED IN THE ANXIETY AND TERROR CREATED BY **YOUR OWN IMAGINATION.**



YOU MUST HAVE ME MISTAKEN FOR SOMEONE ELSE.

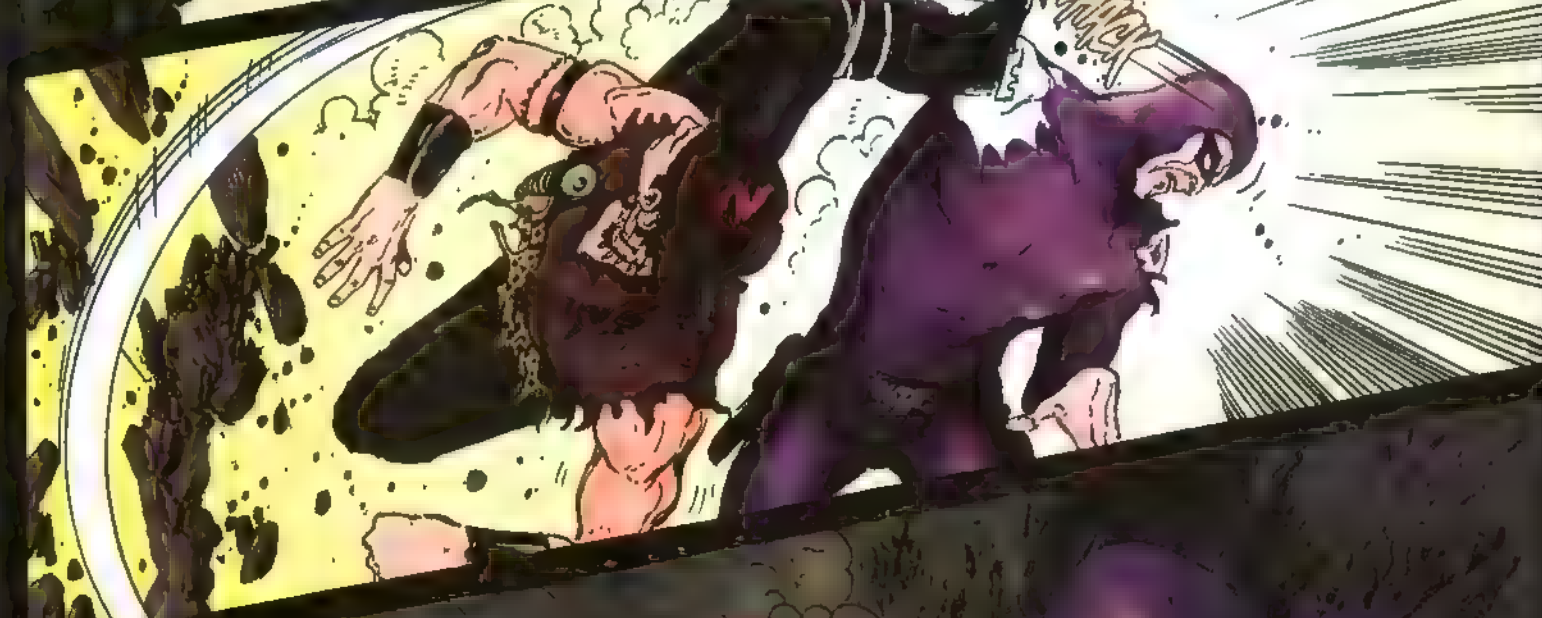
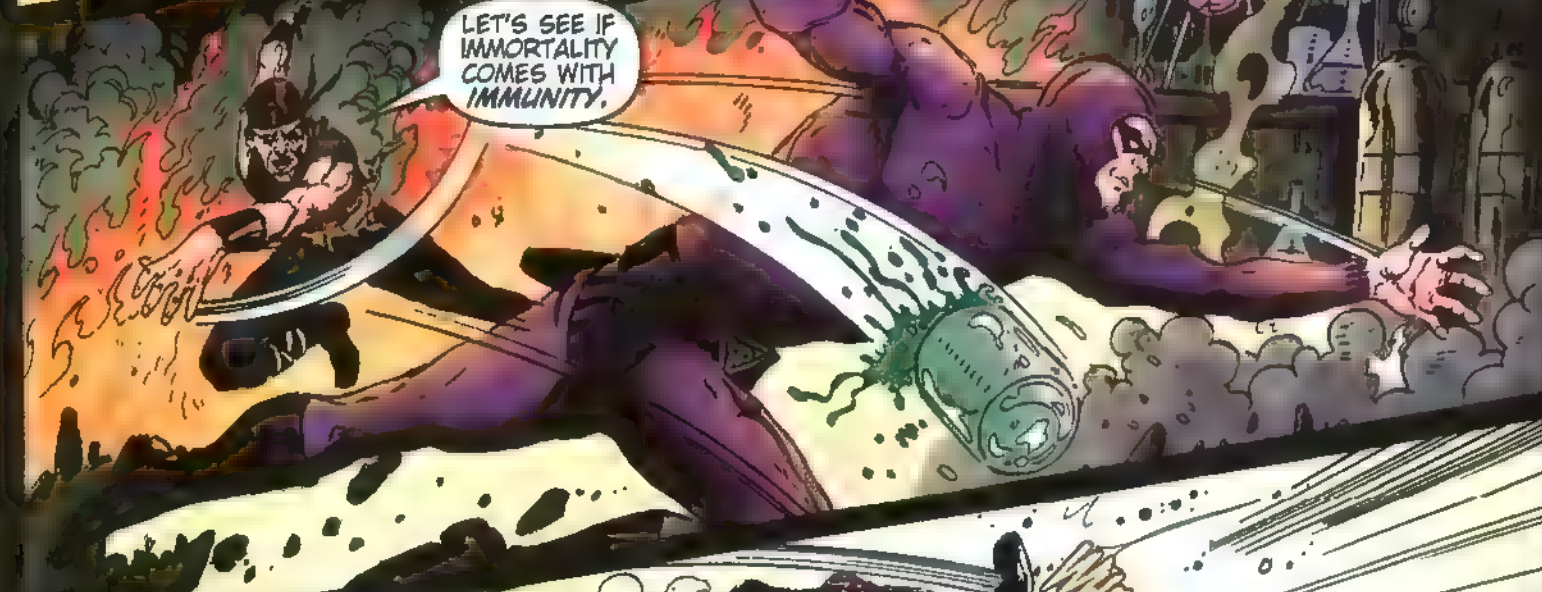
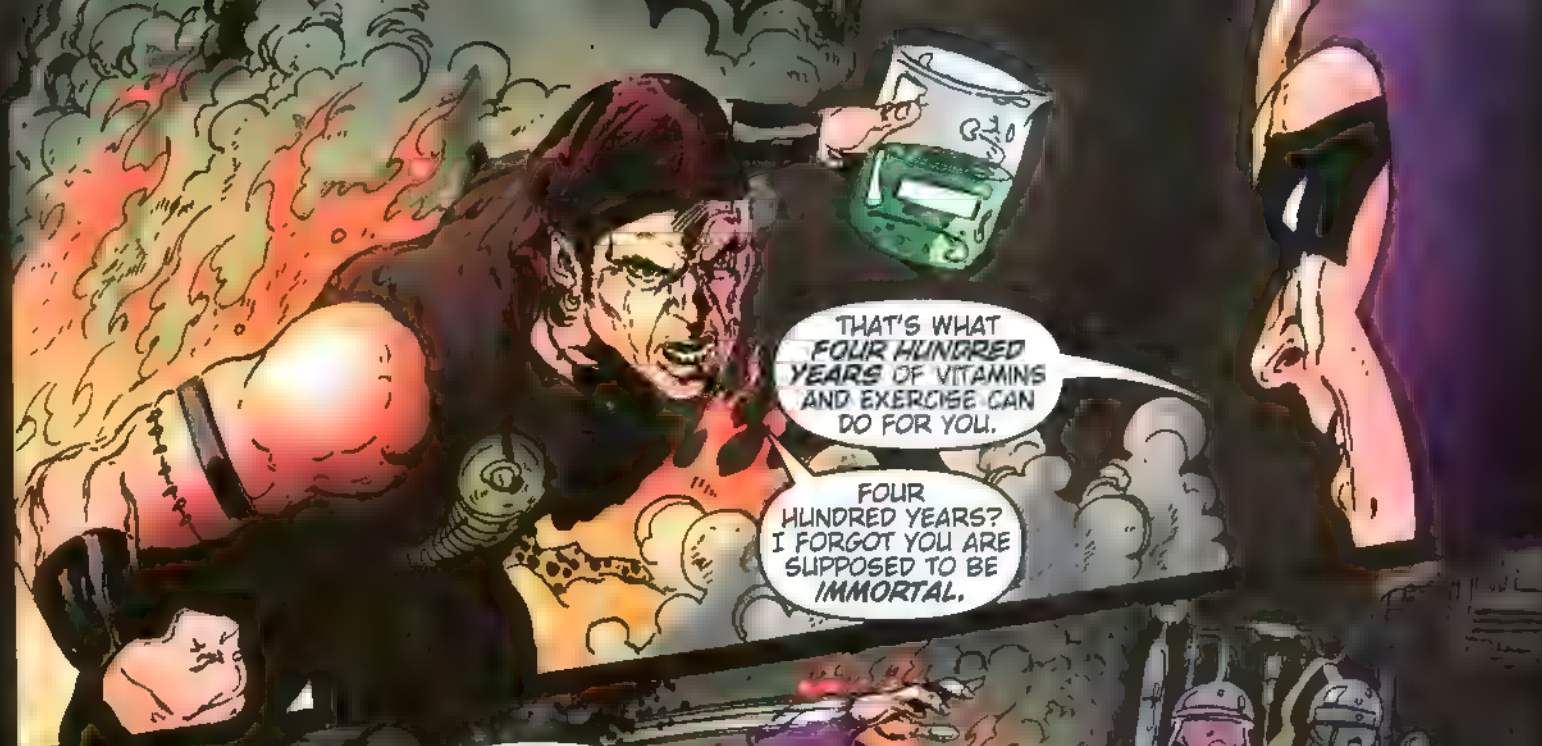
IF YOU'RE NOT AFRAID, THEN WHY ARE YOU TRYING TO **ESCAPE**, MY LITTLE GUINEA PIG? YOU CAN'T HIDE FROM YOUR OWN **WORST FEARS!**



OH, I WOULDN'T THINK OF LEAVING THE PARTY **EARLY**. I JUST NEEDED SOME FRESH AIR, AND SOME OF THE FUMES FROM THE ANTIDOTE, TO CLEAR MY THOUGHTS.



YOU DO HAVE THE STRENGTH OF TEN TIGERS, DON'T YOU?







THOSE MEN
WILL **BURN TO
DEATH** IN
THERE!

EVEN
BAD GUYS
DESERVE
A GOOD
RESCUE.



YOU TOOK A
PRETTY STRONG
DOSE OF THAT DRUG,
BUT LUCKILY FOR
YOU, YOU ALSO LAID
IN A CLOUD OF THE
ANTIDOTE VAPOR
FOR A BIT.

AS FOR
MANUEL, I
COULDN'T FIND
HIS BODY--

JUST BE HAPPY
I SAVED YOUR LIVES.
THAT THOUGHT SHOULD
KEEP YOU **WARM** AT
NIGHT IN JAIL.

WH-WHAT
HAPPENED?
WHERE'S
MANUEL?

"WE INTERRUPT TONIGHT'S
HIT TRACKS DANCE MIX WITH A SPECIAL
NEWS UPDATE: THE MEN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE
RECENT RASH OF POACHING, STEMMING FROM A
DEMAND FOR THE NEW DRUG, CLUPID, HAVE BEEN
APPREHENDED BY THE JUNGLE PATROL, AFTER
THEIR PROCESSING LAB WAS DISCOVERED
AND DESTROYED IN A DARING LATE
NIGHT RAID.

THE RING LEADER
APPEARS TO HAVE DIED AT THE
SCENE, THE VICTIM OF A CHEMICAL
FIRE SPARKED BY AN UNKNOWN
CAUSE."

"AND NOW WE'LL
SEND YOU BACK TO
PARTY NIGHT'S HIT
TRACKS DANCE MIX!
LET'S PARTY!"

THE PARTY
ISN'T OVER YET,
PHANTOM, NOT BY ANY
STRETCH OF THE
IMAGINATION.

Behind the Mask

The Phantom's Skull Ring

When I was a pre school age kid, I couldn't wait to sit on my dad's knee while he read the Phantom newspaper strip to me each day. I was enthralled by this strange character and his skull motif. Even today, I recall how cool I thought his skull ring was. He punched the bad guys and they carried its imprint forever. Whenever he wanted to scare someone, he would leave the 'death's head' mark on a glass they were about to use, on a desk, or even as his signature on a short note.

Just how the ring worked was a mystery and a matter of conjecture.

For his interview on the A&E Biography, Lee said it was a secret. In the US Charlton comic series, it was explained as a mysterious jungle dye. On the cover of Avon paperback #2, the painting by the late George Wilson seems to show a scarring from the ring, and the Paramount film made the ring have magical properties.

Since Phantom creator Lee Falk wrote copy for a radio station in St. Louis that featured adventures of the Spider who burned a spider mark on the faces of the dispatched villains, it would seem his idea was influenced by this earlier pulp hero. However, Lee never gave an explanation for just how the ring worked.

Each artist presented their own interpretations of the appearance of the ring. Ray Moore's earliest illustration showed the ring to be similar to the Phantom's belt buckle which gave the skull a striped triangle for a background. The next Phantom artist, Wilson McCoy, had a skull ring made for himself and used a simple skull with no background as did the ring worn by Tom Tyler in the 1943 Columbia movie serial, "The Phantom."

When legendary Phantom artist Sy Barry began drawing the strip in 1961, he updated the design. Sy felt the ring should look more practical for leaving the famous image, so he drew a ring that was basically a flat rectangle with a raised skull mark. A very similar ring was licensed by Planet Studios, and I had the honor of modeling it along with their goodmark ring for the close-ups used in the A&E Phantom Biography.

In 1996, the Paramount film introduced a new concept...a heavy silver antique ring with supernatural properties. Instead of tattooing the victim's face with a jungle dye, the ring somehow molded the villains flesh to show a three dimensional scar shaped like a 'death's head,' a term Falk used in the strip to describe the ring. With a little help from the producers of Zane's costume, Hensen's Creature Studios, Friends of the Phantom were able to present penciler George Olesen and inker Keith Williams with exact replicas of Billy Zane's ring, and soon afterward, the strip sported an exciting new look with a panel inspired by the 'slam evil' movie posters.

The current Sunday strip artist, Graham Nolan's rendering of the skull and goodmark rings is based on his Planet Studios ring set which has each symbol raised in a circle. "I always thought the Phantom's mark was a scar...you punch a guy and you scar him for life." Graham explains, "The goodmark I figured it had to be some kind of dye, because he's not going to inflict pain."

The skull ring has been interpreted various ways throughout the years in Phantom comics, in both US and foreign versions. The latest version is shown on Doug Klauba's beautifully painted cover for Moonstone issue #4 in a dramatic presentation.

-Ed Rhoades

